

ACQUISITION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (APDP)

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR

DEVELOPMENTAL AND SUSTAINING ENGINEERING (DSE) FUNCTIONAL AREA

SYSTEMS PLANNING, RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & ENGINEERING (SPRDE) CERTIFICATION

PLEASE--Read these instructions before contacting your APDP Focal Point!

BACKGROUND. On 5 November 1990, the Mavroules Bill became Public Law (PL) 101-510, the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). DAWIA was first implemented in December 1990 via AFRs 36-27 and 40-110 (draft). DOD Manual 5000.52-M was released November 1991, with the Air Force certification requirements becoming effective with SAF/AQ MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM/FOA/CV, "Certification in the Acquisition Professional Development Program," 27 March 1992. The memorandum rescinded the certification requirements in AFRs 36-27 and 40-110, and provided Interim Guidance while new directives were drafted. Effective 15 December 1993, the Air Force was directed to use DOD 5000.52-M mandatory certification requirements *without change or supplementation*. DOD now controls the certification requirements and training through the Defense Acquisition University (DAU). These instructions provide the current SPRDE certification standards and a review of the DSE application procedures **as of 1 October 1996**.

REQUIREMENTS. Refer to the SPRDE Certification Standards (Atch 1) for the mandatory Experience, Education, and Training requirements. The DOD mandatory or desired courses listed in the SPRDE Certification Standards are the **ONLY** courses acceptable for certification without a fulfillment!

HOW TO APPLY. You must formally request certification by submitting an application letter detailing how you meet SPRDE requirements using the format shown in the sample letter at Attachment 2. This format is necessary because unlike other stalls, the requirement for engineering experience means we must confirm SPRDE-related experience which is not always obvious on a SURF or Career Brief. Please follow these steps:

1. GET AN UPDATED SURF OR CAREER BRIEF. First, ***military personnel*** should contact the servicing MPF and request an APDP SURF (a short personnel brief) to attach to the letter. The SURF will summarize your education, training courses, duty titles, AFSCs, current APDP certification levels, acquisition and SPO time. ***Civilians*** should contact the servicing CPF and request an Acquisition Career Brief (Option 5) to attach to the letter. When you order your Option 5, make sure you ask for both Parts 1 and 2. Part 2 summarizes your acquisition coding. The Career Brief contains similar information to the military SURF.

IMPORTANT: *If your SURF or Career Brief is not current or correct, annotate it and attach supporting documentation, then forward it to your personnel office to update your official record. An updated SURF or Career Brief may reduce the need for additional supporting documentation described in these instructions, and will enhance your acquisition career opportunities.*

2. DOCUMENT YOUR EDUCATION. You must have one of the following: 1.) A Baccalaureate degree (B.S.) in Engineering, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, or related fields or 2.) At least 10 years of acquisition experience in Systems Planning, Research, Development & Engineering. This is **mandatory** for Level I, II or III SPRDE certification. **NOTE: A "critical" position is an acquisition-coded position requiring an incumbent in the grade of O-5 or above or a GM/GS-14 or above.** Anyone occupying a critical position **MUST** be an **Acquisition Corps member** and attain certification to the level required by the position's coding as stated in DOD 5000.52-M. For Acquisition Corps eligibility, you need 12 Semester Hours (SH) or 18 Quarter Hours (QH) of "business" courses. Acquisition Corps eligibility and membership is determined by DP personnel action and is **not** a part of the certification process.

3. DOCUMENT YOUR TRAINING. List all training required for certification you completed (*please--don't waste resources documenting non-acquisition or any other training not applicable to SPRDE certification*). Refer to the attached SPRDE Certification Standards (Atch 1) for the comprehensive list of acceptable training courses. It is important to have acquisition training documented in your official personnel record. Your application will be rejected if your SURF or Career Brief is not updated.

4. DOCUMENT YOUR TRAINING FULFILLMENTS (if used). Fulfillments (DD Form 2518) must be used when requesting credit for previous experience, education, and/or alternative training in lieu of the DOD mandatory courses specifically listed in the SPRDE Certification Standards. This is required by PL 102-484, DOD Manual 5000.52-M and DOD Guide ADS-93-01-GD. A fulfillment accomplishes several things: 1) it documents skills, knowledge and competencies obtained by experience, education, and/or alternative training by a written self-assessment form and supporting documentation attached to the DD Form 2518; 2) it formally grants recognition and approval/disapproval of your request; 3) it serves as an audit trail since the package is formally reviewed and the form signed by members of your chain of command; and 4) it serves as a source document for entry of course credit into your official personnel record after approval. The January 1993 Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Guide, "Mandatory Course Fulfillment Program and Competency Standards," ADS-93-01-GD, contains the competency standards for all DOD mandatory courses for the various career paths. SAF/AQ released the "Air Force Fulfillment Policy and Procedures" letter, 13 April 1993, which provides Air Force guidance on how to implement DOD Guide ADS-93-01-GD. **The DOD Guide contains the competency self-assessment forms which the applicant must complete and attach to the DD Form 2518, in addition to any supporting documentation.** The DOD and Air Force guidance states that fulfillments are intended for personnel who have acquisition-related experience in the course area being fulfilled.

a. When you prepare your fulfillment package, please use an original DD Form 2518 or make sure the copy is *legible and aligned with the paper*. **If, for example, you wish to fulfill SYS-201 based upon your experience, education and/or alternative training** (i.e. you did **not** take one of the DOD mandatory courses), then you should obtain a copy of the SYS-201 competency form in ADS-93-01-GD, or ask your focal point for a copy (*if you took an actual vendored course see para. 4.c. below*). Fill in the blocks of the competency form with "Yes" and "See attached". You must **answer the competencies from scratch, in an essay-like manner on a blank sheet of paper, by typing the question, then your answer** (you won't be able to fit your answers into the actual competency form, so start with a blank sheet of paper). You need to answer each specific question with your knowledge and include a few sentences explaining your experience, education, and/or alternative training related to the competency question. As you reference previous experience, education and/or alternative training; attach applicable experience documentation, transcripts, and/or proof of alternate course completion with description or syllabus to your fulfillment package. Referencing DOD or Air Force Systems Engineering documents and manuals is a good idea. **Your goal is to show you not only understand the questions, but demonstrate you have obtained the knowledge and have the ability to perform the competencies--in writing.** After your supervisor has concurred with your competency package and signed Section II of the DD Form 2518, then give your focal point the DD Form 2518, with completed competency form and answers, along with any supporting documentation attached. You can submit the fulfillment package with your certification application, or as a stand-alone package.

b. If your center has been delegated certification approval authority for Level I or II, then your Level I or II training fulfillment can be approved by your center. Level III training fulfillments can only be approved at MAJCOM Headquarters or higher. The applicant signs the DD Form 2518 at Section I, the supervisor signs Section II, then the fulfillment package is forwarded to the center APDP Focal Point for review. The Focal Point will then forward it to the center two-letter Engineering Field Functional Manager for concurrence/nonconcurrence and signature of Section III. For **Level III** training fulfillments, Section III is left blank, and reserved for SAF/AQ Functional Manager use. The **Level III** fulfillment package is then

forwarded to SAF/AQRE for a final concurrence/nonconcurrence recommendation and SAF/AQ signature of Section III as directed by SAF/AQ and DOD Guide ADS-93-01-GD.

5. **DOCUMENT YOUR EXPERIENCE.** Your SURF or Career Brief does *not* necessarily indicate you have performed acquisition-related SPRDE activities especially if you are using experience coded in other areas, such as Program Management, Test and Evaluation, etc. List your dates assigned, job title, job series/AFSC, office, location, and total length of assignment, in years and months. Provide a brief description of the duties--enough to explain *HOW* this is acquisition-related SPRDE experience. Four or five brief sentences that describe your acquisition duties should suffice. This is critical for Level II or III certification. It is especially important for civilians since the career briefs do not give any job descriptions. You may need to attach OERs/OPRs or PDs when it is not obvious you performed SPRDE acquisition-related duties, and please **highlight** the applicable text. Reviewers do not have time to search for buried data. The bottom line is: *YOU* must show the reviewers *HOW* you meet experience requirements for SPRDE certification. If there is any doubt as to whether or not the experience counts toward certification, make sure you provide adequate justification. You can count up to one year experience for graduate level academic work. NOTE: Simply attaching and referencing OERs/OPRs or PDs does not satisfy the need to briefly summarize your experience.

a. The following typical duties are acceptable for SPRDE certification in conjunction with the mandatory degree and training requirements (from DOD 5000.52-M):

1. Plan, organize, monitor, manage, oversee, and/or perform research and engineering activities that relate to the design, development, fabrication, installation, modification, or analysis of systems or systems components. Duties may require identification, establishment, organization or implementation of acquisition engineering objectives and policies, or establishment of specifications. The duties are usually accomplished by degreed scientists and engineers performing systems planning, research and development, and/or engineering in direct support of acquisition programs, projects or activities (including medical). May include managers and technical specialists in engineering, chemistry, physics, operations research, mathematics, and computer science fields.

2. Acquisition Logistics, Communications/Computer, Intelligence, Manufacturing and Production, Program Management, Quality Assurance, Science and Technology, or Developmental Test and Evaluation experience are acceptable if they directly relate to the engineering activities described in the previous paragraph.

b. The following types of experience are generally NOT allowed for SPRDE certification:

1. Operational Test & Evaluation time, unless you can document that you directly supported a SPO or the typical SPRDE activities described in para 5.a.1 above at least 50% of your time during the specified period you are referencing.

2. Base Civil Engineering time, unless you can document that you directly supported a SPO by performing MILCON duties in support of weapon system acquisition as described in para 5.a.1 above at least 50% of your time during the specified period you are referencing. Note that Base Civil Engineering positions in general are not coded as acquisition.

6. Provide a location and telephone number where you can be reached--in case the reviewers have questions, and also to help return the certification back to you. Don't forget to sign your application.

ENDORSEMENT. After your package is received and reviewed by your center Focal Point, your center two-letter Engineering Field Functional Manager will endorse your package to SAF/AQRE (if no Engineering

Focal Point at your location, see next paragraph). Other endorsements are not necessary, but your center may require additional coordination or endorsements for their administrative process. Check with your Focal Point for any additional requirements.

FORWARDING YOUR APPLICATION. Send your completed package to your center APDP Focal Point. Your Focal Point will review your package and coordinate any corrections you may need to make. Once your package passes review, the Focal Point will forward it to your center two-letter Engineering Field Functional Manager for endorsement and administrative action. If you are at a location without an Engineering APDP representative, forward your package to: *SAF/AQRE, 1060 Air Force Pentagon, Washington DC 20330-1060*. If specifically delegated approval authority, your center Engineering Field Functional Manager will approve your Level I or II certification. SAF/AQ has approval authority for all SPRDE certification levels. Your package will be reviewed by the SPRDE APDP Program Manager in SAF/AQRE.

PROCESSING TIME: Our goal is to process Level III applications within 4 to 6 weeks of receipt at the headquarters. **CAUTION:** ***We will return any application that does not meet the requirements outlined in these instructions**, which may delay your certification indefinitely.*

QUESTIONS? *Please contact your center APDP Focal Point if you have any questions.* Your center Focal Point has the most current information to answer your questions locally. If your center can't answer your question, your Focal Point will contact the MAJCOM Headquarters and get an answer for you. *Channeling questions through the focal points and helping them get smarter in the process to better handle future questions, has proven to be the most effective and efficient way to serve our Acquisition Workforce.* The SAF/AQRE SPRDE functional POC is Mr. Cal Garner, DSN 225-4976/227-1715 or (703)695-4976 - alternate phone number DSN 225-6969 or (703)695-6969. Fax numbers is (703)697-4936 and e-mail address is : garner@aqpo.hq.af.mil